



PATENT

0505-1261P

IN THE U.S. PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Satoshi IIJIMA et al. Conf.: 3478
Appl. No.: 10/718,803 Group: 3616
Filed: November 24, 2003 Examiner: FAYE M. FLEMING
For: AIR BAG APPARATUS FOR A SCOOTER TYPE
MOTORCYCLE

VERIFICATION OF TRANSLATION

The undersigned hereby declares the following:

That I am knowledgeable in Japanese and English. That I have reviewed Japanese Patent Application No. 2002-060864 and verify that the attached document is an accurate translation thereof.

All statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true. Further, these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Date: February 22, 2005


Kazuhito KODAMA



[DOCUMENT] Specification

[TITLE OF THE INVENTION] Air bag apparatus for a scooter type motorcycle

[WHAT IS CLAIMED IS]

1. An air bag apparatus for a scooter type motorcycle, having an air bag (26) that is capable of restraining an operator on a seat (22) from a front direction, in response to expansion of said air bag, wherein,

said air bag (26), and a vehicle body (14) in the rear of said seat (22), are linked via restraining belts (31) or restraining nets (35) being a pair at right and left, which are stored in said vehicle body (14) when said air bag (26) is in a state of folded, and which become in a state of tension on both exterior sides at right and left of the operator on the seat (22), when said air bag (26) expands.

2. An air bag apparatus for a scooter type motorcycle as defined by claim 1, wherein,

a vehicle body cover (15) constituting said vehicle body (14) together with a vehicle body frame (5) having a head pipe (6) on a front end thereof, said head pipe supporting a front fork (7) in orientation-manipulative manner, comprises a front cover (16), which covers a circumference of said head pipe (6), and an air bag housing (25) for storing said air bag (26) is installed at a forward position of said seat (22) and in the rear of said front cover (16).

3. An air bag apparatus for a scooter type motorcycle as defined by claim 2, wherein,

said vehicle body cover (15) comprises, in addition to

said front cover (16), leg shields (17), being a pair at right and left for covering forward portions of the operator's legs, said leg shields being joined with both right and left sides of the front cover (16), respectively, footrest sections (18), being a pair at right and left connecting respectively to the leg shields (17) for supporting feet of the operator, and a rear cover (21) jointed with the footrest sections (18) for covering both right and left sides of a rear part of said vehicle body frame (5), wherein,

said restraining belts (31) or said restraining nets (35), an end of which is fixedly linked with said air bag (26) and another end of which is linked with said rear cover (21), are stored in storage grooves (33), being a pair at right and left, which are provided over along said front cover (16), said leg shields (17), said footrest sections (18) and said rear cover (21), in such a manner as allowing said restraining belts (31) or said restraining nets (35) to be pulled out, in response to a tension thereof, with expansion of said air bag (26).

[DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION]

[0001]

[TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION]

The present invention relates to an air bag apparatus for a scooter type motorcycle, having an air bag that is capable of restraining an operator on a seat from a front direction, in response to expansion of the air bag.

[0002]

[PRIOR ART]

Conventionally, a type of such air bag apparatus is

already known, for example, by the following patent document 1, etc.

[0003]

[PATENT DOCUMENT 1]

Gazette of Japanese patent application laid-open No. Hei 9-328053.

[0004]

[PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED BY THE INVENTION]

However, with the conventional apparatus, there is a possibility that the operator cannot be restrained sufficiently, even when the air bag expands in front of the operator on the seat, in the case where yaw behavior and/or rolling behavior of the vehicle body are/is large. In order to achieve a secured restraint, it is necessary to enlarge the expansion volume of the air bag, and accordingly, other components, such as inflator, tend to become oversized.

[0005]

The present invention was made considering the above situation, and the objective of the present invention is to provide an air bag apparatus for a scooter type motorcycle, which is capable of securely restraining the operator on the seat, without a need for enlarging the expansion volume of the air bag, even when the yaw behavior and/or rolling behavior of the vehicle body are/is large.

[0006]

[MEANS FOR SOLVING THE PROBLEMS]

In order to achieve the above objective, the invention as defined by claim 1 features an air bag apparatus for a scooter

type motorcycle, comprising an air bag that is capable of retraining an operator on a seat from a front direction, in response to expansion of the air bag, wherein, the air bag and a vehicle body in the rear of the seat are linked via restraining belts or retraining nets, being a pair at right and left, which are stored in the vehicle body when the air bag is in a state of folded, and which become in a state of tension on both exterior sides at right and left of an operator on the seat, when the air bag expands.

[0007]

With the configuration of the invention as defined by claim 1, the restraining belts or the restraining nets are arranged in a state of tension on the both right and left exterior sides of the operator on the seat, at the time of air bag expansion in response to an action of shock against the vehicle. Therefore, it is possible to restrain the operator from the both right and left sides, with the restraining belts or the restraining nets, even when the yaw behavior and/or the rolling behavior of the vehicle body are/is large, and accordingly, it is possible to securely restrain the operator from a front direction, even with the air bag having a small expansion volume.

[0008]

The invention defined by claim 2 features that, in addition to the configuration of the invention as defined by claim 1, a vehicle body cover constituting the vehicle body together with a vehicle body frame having a head pipe on a front end thereof, the head pipe supporting a front fork in

orientation-manipulative manner, comprises a front cover, which covers a circumference of the head pipe, and an air bag housing for storing the air bag is installed at a forward position of the seat and in the rear of the front cover. With this configuration, on a scooter type motorcycle having a concave shape between the seat and the head pipe, formed by denting downwardly the vehicle body, it is possible by the air bag, to securely restrain the operator on the seat from a front direction, without a large modification of the vehicle body shape.

[0009]

Furthermore, the invention defined by claim 3 features, in addition to the configuration of the invention as defined by claim 2, the vehicle body cover comprises, in addition to the front cover, leg shields, being a pair at right and left for covering forward portions of the operator's legs, the leg shields being joined with both right and left sides of the front cover, respectively, footrest sections, being a pair at right and left connecting respectively to the leg shields for supporting feet of the operator, and a rear cover jointed with the footrest sections, for covering both right and left sides of a rear part of the vehicle body frame, wherein, the restraining belts or the restraining nets, an end of which is fixedly linked with the air bag and another end of which is linked with the rear cover, are stored in storage grooves, being a pair at right and left, which are provided over along the front cover, the leg shields, the footrest sections and the rear cover, in such a manner as allowing the restraining belts

or the restraining nets to be pulled out, in response to a tension thereof, with expansion of the air bag. With this configuration, it is possible for the scooter type motorcycle having footrest sections formed between the seat and the front cover, to store the restraining belts or the restraining nets, so as not to be obstacles at the time of getting on/off and driving, as well as maintaining a natural external view, when the air bag is in a state of non-expanded.

[0010]

[MODES FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION]

Hereinafter, modes for carrying out the present invention will be explained, based on the embodiments of the present invention as shown in the attached drawings.

[0011]

Fig. 1 to Fig. 4 show a first embodiment of the present invention. Fig. 1 is a side view of a scooter type motorcycle, Fig. 2 is an enlarged cross sectional view of Fig. 1, taken along line 2-2, Fig. 3 is a side view of the scooter type motorcycle, at the time of air bag expansion, and Fig. 4 is a plan view of Fig. 3.

[0012]

Firstly, in Fig. 1, at a head pipe 6 provided at a front end of a vehicle body frame 5 of the scooter type motorcycle, a front fork 7 is supported in orientation-manipulative manner, and a front wheel WF is axially supported at the lower end of the front fork 7. An orientation-manipulating handle 8 is coupled with the upper portion of the front fork 7.

[0013]

At a midway between the front and rear of the vehicle body frame 5, a power unit 9 containing an engine and a transmission is mounted, and a rear wheel WR is axially supported in the rear of a swing arm 10, which is supported by the rear part of the power unit 9, in such a manner that wobbling up and down is possible. Further, a power from the power unit 9 is transmitted to the rear wheel WR via an endless type chain 11.

[0014]

A rear cushion unit 13 is installed between a seat rail 12 and the swing arm 10, which are provided in the rear of the vehicle body frame 5.

[0015]

The vehicle body frame 5 is covered with a vehicle body cover 15, made of synthetic resin, which constitutes the vehicle body 14 together with the vehicle body frame 5, and the vehicle body cover 15 covers a circumference of the head pipe 6, and further comprises a front cover 16 for covering the front wheel WF from above, leg shields 17, being a pair at right and left for covering a forward portion of the operator's legs, the leg shields being joined with both right and left sides of the front cover 16, respectively, footrest sections 18, being a pair at right and left, connecting to the leg shields 17, respectively, so as to support the feet of the operator, a floor tunnel section 19 that is raised upwardly between the footrest sections 18, skirt sections 20 that are hanging downwardly from outer edges of the both footrest sections 18, respectively, and a rear cover 21 which is joined

with the footrest sections 18 and the floor tunnel section 19, covering the both right and left sides of the rear part of the vehicle body frame 5.

[0016]

On the rear cover 21, a front seat 22 on which an operator sits, and a rear seat 23, on which a fellow passenger sits, the rear seat being arranged in the rear of the front seat 22.

[0017]

Also referring to Fig. 2, it is shown that at a position in front of the operator sitting on the front seat 22, for example, in the rear of the front cover 16, an air bag module 24 of the air bag apparatus is installed.

[0018]

The air bag module 24 comprises an air bag housing 25, an air bag 26 stored in the air bag housing 25, and an inflator 27 to generate gas for expanding the air bag 26.

[0019]

The air bag housing 25 comprises a storage tube unit 28, which is formed in a shape of tube having a tangible bottom, made of synthetic resin, in such a manner that it is capable of storing the air bag 26 in a folded manner, and a cover unit 29 for closing an upper end opening of the storage tube unit 28, and the storage tube unit 28 is installed in the rear of the front cover 16, either integrally or as a separate member.

[0020]

On the periphery of the cover unit 29, a fragile portion 29a is provided, except one point in the peripheral direction, and the fragile portion 29a is formed in such a manner that

it is capable of bursting easily.

[0021]

The air bag 26 is formed in a shape of bag, having an opening portion 26a on the undersurface thereof, and it is stored in the air bag housing 25, in a folded manner. Further, the inflator 27 is supported by a cap 30 that is mounted fixedly to the opening portion 26a on the undersurface of the air bag 26, and the cap 30 is fixed on a block end of the storage tube unit 28.

[0022]

A shock detecting sensor (not shown), such as acceleration sensor, is installed on the vehicle body frame 5, and the inflator 27 is activated in response to a detection of shock by the shock detecting sensor, the shock being not smaller than a predetermined value, so as to provide high pressure gas into the air bag 26.

[0023]

At a position corresponding to the fragile portion 29a and between the storage tube unit 28 and the cover unit 29 of the air bag housing 25, through holes 32, 32, being a pair at right and left are provided. Ends of restraining belts 31, 31, being a pair at right and left, made of nylon, for example, are inserted through the both through holes (32, 32) *check* respectively, into the air bag housing 25, so that those restraining belts are fixedly joined with the both sides of the air bag 26, respectively.

[0024]

The other ends of both restraining belts 31, 31 are

fixedly attached to both right and left sides of the rear cover 21 of the vehicle body 14, in the rear of the front seat 22. A length of these restraining belts 31, 31 becomes short so that those belts can be stored in the vehicle body 14 when the air bag 26 is folded within the air bag housing 25. On the other hand, when the air bag 26 expands, the restraining belts are set to be in a state of tension on the both right and left exterior sides of the operator on the front seat 22.

[0025]

On the vehicle body cover 15 of the vehicle body 14, storage grooves 33, which are pair at right and left allowing the restraining belts 31, 31 to be stored therein, are provided over along the front cover 16, the leg shield 17, the footrests 18 and the rear cover 21. These storage grooves 33 are covered with a cover (not shown), which is capable of bursting in accordance with the tension of the restraining belts 31, 31 accompanied with expansion of the air bag 26. In other words, the restraining belts 31 are stored in the storing grooves 33, so as to be pulled out in response to the tension of the restraining belts 31, with expansion of the air bag 26.

[0026]

Next, an operation of the first embodiment will be explained. When the shock detecting sensor detects a shock of not smaller than a predetermined value, due to a collision and the like, the inflator 27 is activated and provides high pressure gas into the air bag 26. Then, as shown in Fig. 3 and Fig. 4, the air bag 26 allows the fragile part 29a of the air bag housing 25 to burst, and expands upwards instantaneously,

along with opening the cover unit 29. Accordingly, the operator sitting on the front seat 22 is restrained from the front direction with thus expanded air bag 26.

[0027]

In the meantime, the air bag 26 and the rear cover 21 of the vehicle body 14 in the rear of the front seat 22 are linked via restraining belts 31, 31, being a pair at right and left, which are stored in the vehicle body cover 15 of the vehicle body 14, when the air bag 26 is in a state of folded, and which become in a state of tension, at right and left exterior sides of the operator on the seat 22, when the air bag expands.

[0028]

Accordingly, when the air bag 26 expands, the restraining belts 31, 31 are arranged in a state of tension at right and left exterior sides of the operator on the front seat 22, whereby the operator can be restrained from the both sides right and left with the restraining belts 31, 31, even if a yaw behavior and/or a rolling behavior of the vehicle body 14 are/is large. Therefore, it is possible to securely restrain the operator from the front direction even with the air bag 26 having a small expansion volume.

[0029]

In addition, since the air bag housing 25 for storing the air bag 26 is installed at a forward position of the front seat 22 and in the rear of the front cover 16, a scooter type motorcycle having a concave shape between the front seat 22 and the head pipe 6, formed by denting downwardly the vehicle

body 14, does not need a large modification of the vehicle body shape, and it is possible by the air bag 26, to securely restrain the operator on the front seat 22 from a front direction.

Moreover, the restraining belts 31, an end of which is fixedly linked with the air bag 26 and another end of which is linked with the rear cover 21 are stored in storage grooves 33, being a pair at right and left, which are provided over along the front cover 16, the leg shields 17, the footrest sections 18 and the rear cover 21, in such a manner as allowing the restraining belts 31 to be pulled out, in response to a tension thereof, with expansion of the air bag 26. With this configuration, it is possible for the scooter type motorcycle having footrest sections 18 formed between the front seat 22 and the front cover 16 to store the restraining belts 31, so as not to be obstacles at the time of getting on/off and driving, as well as maintaining a natural external view, when the air bag 26 is in a state of non-expanded.

[0030]

Fig. 5 shows the second embodiment of the present invention, and to the parts corresponding to first embodiment, explanations of the identical reference numbers are applied.

[0031]

The air bag 26 for restraining the operator on the front seat 22 from the front direction in response to expansion of the air bag, and the rear cover 21 of the vehicle body 14 in the rear of the front seat 22 are linked via restraining nets 35, being pair at right and left, which are stored in the vehicle body cover 15 of the vehicle body, when the air bag 26 is in

a state of folded, and which become in a state of tension in the both right and left exterior sides of the operator on the front seat 22, when the air bag 26 expands. These restraining nets 35 are made of nylon, for example.

[0032]

Similar effects as achieved by the first embodiment can be attained by the second embodiment.

[0033]

The embodiments of the present invention have been explained above, but the present invention is not limited to the embodiments thus described and various design change is possible without deviating from the present invention as defined in the claims.

[0034]

[EFFECT OF THE INVENTION]

According to the invention as defined in claim 1, restraining belts or restraining nets are arranged in a state of tension at right and left exterior sides of an operator on the seat, when the air bag expands. Therefore, it is possible to restrain the operator from both right and left sides with restraining belts or the restraining nets, even if a yaw behavior and/or a rolling behavior of the vehicle body are/is large, whereby the operator can be securely restrained even with the air bag having a small expansion volume.

[0035]

Furthermore, according to the invention as defined in claim 2, a scooter type motorcycle having a concave shape between the seat and the head pipe, formed by denting downwardly

the vehicle body, does not need a large modification of the vehicle body shape, and it is possible by the air bag, to securely restrain the operator on the seat from a front direction.

[0036]

Furthermore, according to the invention as defined in claim 3, it is possible for the scooter type motorcycle having footrest sections formed between the seat and the front cover to store the restraining belts or retraining nets, so as not to be obstacles at the time of getting on/off and driving, as well as maintaining a natural external view, when the air bag is in a state of non-expanded.

[BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS]

Fig. 1 is a side view of a scooter type motorcycle of the first embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 2 is an enlarged cross sectional view of Fig. 1, taken along line 2-2.

Fig. 3 is a side view of the scooter type motorcycle, at the time of air bag expansion.

Fig. 4 is a plan view of Fig. 3.

Fig. 5 is a side view of a scooter type motorcycle of the second embodiment of the present invention.

[DESCRIPTION OF THE MARKS]

- 5 vehicle body frame
- 6 head pipe
- 7 front fork
- 14 vehicle body
- 15 vehicle body cover

16 front cover
17 leg shield
18 footrest section
21 rear cover
22 seat
25 air bag housing
26 air bag
31 restraining belt
33 storage groove
35 restraining net

[DOCUMENT] Abstract

[ABSTRACT]

[SUBJECT] An objective of the present invention is to provide an air bag apparatus for a compact vehicle, having an air bag that is capable of restraining an operator on a seat from a front direction, in response to expansion of the air bag, wherein it is possible to securely restrain the operator on the seat without a need for enlarging the expansion volume of the air bag, even if a yaw behavior and/or a rolling behavior of the vehicle body are/is large.

[SOLUTION] The air bag 26 and the vehicle 14 in the rear of the seat 22 are linked via restraining belts 31, being a pair at right and left, which are stored in the vehicle body 14, when the air bag 26 is in a state of folded, and which become in a state of tension, at right and left exterior sides of the operator on the seat 22, when the air bag 26 expands.

[SELECTED DRAWINGS] Figure 3